

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EARL MORSE

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER & DAVID L. HOBSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. BOEHNER & MR. HOBSON, Madam Speaker, we rise today to recognize Mr. Earl Morse, an Ohioan who has dedicated himself to honoring World War II veterans from across the country by making it possible for them to visit the national memorial built and dedicated in their honor.

Mr. Morse is a physician's assistant and a retired Air Force captain from Enon, Ohio. While working at the Department of Veterans Affairs, he realized that most of the veterans he took care of were not able to make the trip to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Since Mr. Morse was also a pilot, he offered to personally fly one of his patients to visit the memorial.

Upon realizing the desire to visit the memorial was so great, Mr. Morse started to ask for help from other pilots to make these trips a reality. During an aero club meeting in January of 2005, he outlined a volunteer program to fly senior World War II veterans to visit their memorial with no cost to the veteran. The pilots would be asked to volunteer the use of their aircraft and their time. After Mr. Morse spoke, 11 pilots who had never met his patients signed up to establish the first of what would be many "Honor Flights."

In 2005, the Honor Flight program took 137 World War II veterans to visit their memorial. As the popularity of the program grew, the need for more volunteers and the use of commercial aircraft became necessary. By 2006, an estimated 300 Ohio veterans made the trip to visit the World War II Memorial.

The mission and ideals of Mr. Morse's Honor Flight soon spread across the nation, and a network of community leaders and volunteers became established to form the Honor Flight Network. The program presently has 69 hubs in 30 states, and is working to establish hubs in all 50 states by the end of 2008.

Madam Speaker, on the eve of Memorial Day, we feel that it is only fitting to pay tribute to Mr. Morse, who has demonstrated his patriotism and his respect for a generation of men and women who sacrificed so much to ensure the security of this world, and to guarantee the freedoms that we enjoy today.

We thank Mr. Earl Morse for his outstanding effort to honor the legacy of one of our nation's most valuable resources, our veterans. We wish him, and his organization, all the best with his continued effort to ensure his objective is completed.